

TONY'S LATE PENALTY DECIDES

By MICHAEL KNOX Wycombe Wanderers 3, Woking 2

A DISPUTED penalty by Tony Horseman eight minutes from time gave Wycombe Wanderers a desperately narrow victory over Woking in a fluctuating Rothmans Isthmian League Division One encounter at Loakes Park on Tuesday night.

Woking, who looked considerably more skilful than their fellow Surrey club Sutton United, were holding Wycombe to an apparent 2-2 draw, when Derek Edwards, a tall and clumsy centre-half, appeared to bring down Keith Searle on the Woking five yard-line.

Referee Mr. Bill Cleere from Downley had no doubt in his mind that it was a penalty. But the Woking players thought otherwise, and one of them Vic Reynolds, a former Australian professional was booked for showing dissent.

With the league offering three points for a win this season, there was an extra burden on the shoulders of Horseman, who only come on to the field seven minutes earlier. But after a considerable delay, "Bodger" sent the ball unerringly to Dave Collyer's left.

RELIEF

No wonder the Wycombe players expressed relief. For Woking never refused to lie down but this was a killer blow from which to recover, and Wycombe's and three points were enough to keep them at the top of the table.

In a way this was a perfect result for Wycombe. They were made to work hard and they certainly will not be taking Woking lightly, when the two teams meet tomorrow (Saturday) in an F.A. Cup second qualifying round tie.

And the Blues are unlikely to look as fragile at the back. On Tuesday they desperately missed the dominating Dave Bullock at centre half. Bullock, who injured a knee during the Sutton match was replaced by the veteran Ian Rundle.

It was not that Rundle played badly, but his partner at the heart of the defence, Phil Wood, seemed to go to pieces. He looked uncertain all evening and was

largely responsible for giving Woking a shock lead after only four minutes.

A long ball was pumped up-field and went straight to Wood on the edge of the penalty. He dithered on the ball and then sent a half-hearted back pass to John Maskell. But Ken Oram intercepted the ball, rounded Maskell and slotted the ball home.

Reynolds and the bustling Graham Cooper always broke quickly from deep positions, so even when Wycombe were on the offensive, these players had to be watched.

But Wycombe, undeterred by giving away such a soft goal,

came storming back and apart from the odd Woking break, play was centred round the visitors penalty area for the rest of the half.

Searle looked particularly sharp and one curling shot hit with the outside of the foot went inches past Dave Collyer's post. Collyer, of course, was the man responsible for Woking's victory at Loakes Park last November.

And he brought back memories of that unforgettable display, when he brilliantly tipped another Searle shot over the bar. The centre-forward then saw another effort hit the side-netting.

But in the 29th minute, Keith

got the goal that he deserved. Micky Holifield's free-kick lobbed into the goalmouth. Collyer hesitated for a fractional second and in stormed Searle to flash it into the net from close range.

Wycombe were at this stage playing with supreme confidence and Collyer had to be at his best to save two efforts from Steve Perrin. The first, he blocked from point-blank range and the second struck his legs and went for a corner.

However just three minutes before the interval, he could not prevent Blues taking the lead. A throw-in on the left was flicked on by Searle, and Perrin

lurching forward headed inside the near post.

Oram should have levelled matters in the 49th minute. Tony Roberts' cross to the far post found John Grondona, who nodded back to Oram five yards in front of an open goal. But the ramrod centre-forward completely mistimed his shot.

Larry Pritchard, who had one of his quieter games, hit a post from a shot out of the blue and Searle brought the best out of Collyer with an overhead kick, as Blues appeared to be cruising towards victory.

Tony Price, who had pleased the crowd with some fine runs, was replaced by Horseman in the 74th minute and within seconds Woking had equalised. A corner on the right was headed on by Edwards and Oram with an acrobatic kick gave Maskell no chance.

Then came the controversial penalty award and for the last five minutes Blues produced some of their best football of the match, with Searle once again at the centre of things.

Special mention should be made of Rob Williams, who despite the inconvenience of having lost a contact lens, gave yet another 100 per cent display. At the end of the match, a group of young fans scoured the ground looking for the missing object.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; D. Gamblin, R. Grant, P. Wood, I. Rundle, R. Williams, S. Perrin, L. Pritchard, K. Searle, M. Holifield, A. Price (sub: A. Horseman 75 mins.).
Woking: D. Collyer; D. Cheeseman, R. Underwood, B. Finn, D. Edwards, G. Copper, G. Chapple, V. Reynolds, K. Oram, J. Grondona, A. Roberts. Sub: G. Pallinski (not used).

Referee: Mr. W. Cleere (Downley).
Half-time: 2-1. **Scorers:** Wycombe: Searle (29 mins), Perrin (42), Horseman (pen 82); Woking: Oram (47.5).